

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 CIAE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6278

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINS, SU

SUBJECT: SHANAAN CONSPIRACY - TRIAL BEGINS

REF: KHARTOUM 0136 AND 0153

1. SUMMARY: TRIAL OF BRIGADIER SHANAAN ARRESTED JAN 25 FOR PLOTTING ASSASSINATION NIMAIRI AND OTHER GOS LEADERS BEGINS TODAY. WHILE TIMING OF TRIAL RAISES QUESTION, WE BELIEVE IT IS UNRELATED TO BSO CASE. RATHER GOS, HAVING BUILT UP SHANAAN AFFAIR OUT OF ALL PROPORTION, IS NOW FORCED TO CARRY THROUGH AND PROBABLY BELIEVES DELAYING TRIAL WOULD ONLY SERVE FORTHER TO STRAIN ITS CREDIBILITY IN THIS CASE. END SUMMARY.

2. GOS HAS ANNOUNCED TRIAL OF RETIRED BRIGADIER ABDEL RAHIM SHANAAN AND EIGHT OTHERS WILL BEGIN TODAY, MAR 21, BEFORE COURT MARTIAL. SHANAAN AND HIS CO- DEFENDANTS (INCLUDING HIS SON, AN IMAM FROM LOCAL MOSQUYN ONE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE, TWO NCOS (CORPORALS) AND THREE PRIVATES FACE FOUR CHARGES. TWO ARE UNDER PENAL CODE FOR PLOTTING TO INTIMIDATE GOVERNMENT BY CRIMINAL FORCE AND FOR GATHERING MEN AND ARMS TO PREPARE WAR AGAINST GOVERNMENT. OTHER TWO CHARGES ARE IN CATEGORY OF CRIMES AGAINST STATE AS SPECIFIED IN REPUBLICAN ORDERS. TRIAL IS TO BE PUBLIC AND CHIEF PROSECUTOR WILL BE POLICE COMMISSIONER ABBAS MEDANI, WHO HAS ALSO MIBEEN MEMBER OF THREE- MAN INVESTIGATING TEAM ON BSO ASSASSINATION CASE.

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EM IT IS NOTABLE THAT WHILE NIMAIRE EARLIER TIED THREE ARRESTED LABOR UNION LEADERS TO SHANAAN PLOT, NONE OF THEM HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN CHARGE. (LABOR LEADERS ARE STLL IN JAIL, HOWEVER). GOS HAS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT VARIOUS FORMER POLITICIANS WHO WERE ARRESTED REPORTEDLY IN CONNECTION WITH PLOT HAVE BEEN RELEASED, AGAZN WITHOUT CHARGE.

4. COMMENT. TIMING THIS TRIAL (WITH BSO TRIAL IN OFFING) OBVIOUSLY RAISES QUESTION. MAIN THEORY IS THAT GOS REACTING TO PUBLIC SPECULATION THAT, AS IN CASE NUMBER OF PREVIOUS ALLEGED PLOTS, SO- CALLED SHANAAN CONSPIRATORS WOULD NEVER BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL. THIS WOULD PROVE IT ALL LARGELY HOAX DESIGNED TO DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM LABOR AND ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. WITH ALMOST TWO MONTHS HAVING PASSED SINCE ARRESTS, IT IS HIGH TIME FOR TRIAL IF THERE IS SUBSTANCE TO CHARGES.

5. OTHER CONCEIVABLE EXPLANATION WOULD BE TO DIRECT ATTENTION FROM AFTERMATH BSO ASSASSINATIONS. EVEN WERE THIS GOS AIM, IZOT NOT LIKELY BE SUCCESSFUL SINCE PUBLIC APPEARS BORED BY SHANAAN AFFAIR AND VERY MUCH FOCUSED ON TERRORIST ASSASSINATIONS.

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES FIRST EXPLANATION IS CORRECT. I. E., GOS IS SIMPLY TRYING TIDY UP LOOSE ENDS OF SHANAAN AFFAIR, WHICH LARGELY ONE OF ITS OWN CREATION, WITHKQS XFKT AMOUNT OF EMBARRASSMENT OR DAMAGE TO ITS CREDIBILITY.
FRITTS

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